

**NOTICE TO VENDORS
Request for Proposals**

**Broadband Feasibility Study
Worcester County, Maryland**

The Worcester County Commissioners are seeking proposals from qualified vendors to perform a Broadband Feasibility Study as a key input in the development of a comprehensive community broadband strategy. The feasibility study will explore the costs and logistics of procuring a countywide broadband network. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are available from the Office of the County Commissioners, Room 1103 - Worcester County Government Center, One West Market Street, Snow Hill, Maryland 21863, obtained online under the "Bids" drop-down menu in the lower right hand side of the home page at www.co.worcester.md.us, or by calling the Commissioners' Office at 410-632-1194 to request a package by mail. **Sealed proposals will be accepted until 1:00 PM, Monday, February 11, 2019** in the Office of the County Commissioners at the above address, at which time they will be opened and publicly read aloud. Envelopes shall be marked "**Proposal for Broadband Feasibility Study**" in the lower left-hand corner. Email submissions will not be accepted

After opening, proposals will be forwarded to the Department of Information Technology for tabulation, review and recommendation to the County Commissioners for their consideration at a future meeting. In awarding the proposal, the Commissioners reserve the right to reject any and all proposals, waive formalities, informalities and technicalities therein, and to take whatever proposal they determine to be in the best interest of the County considering cost, proposal content, qualifications of the vendor, quality of project approach, time of delivery or completion, responsibility of vendors being considered, previous experience of vendors with County contracts, or any other factors they deem appropriate. All inquiries shall be directed to Brian Jones, Director of Information Technology, at 410-632-5610, ext. 1522 or by email at bjones@co.worcester.md.us



Request for Proposal

Broadband Feasibility Study

Worcester County
Request for Proposal (RFP) for Broadband Feasibility Study

DATE OF THIS REQUEST: 1/8/2019

DESCRIPTION: *Broadband Feasibility Study*

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 2/11/2019 @ 1:00 p.m. EST

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Two (2) copies of the proposal, including one original (clearly marked "ORIGINAL"), and one copy in Microsoft WORD format or PDF on CD/Flash Drive, shall be submitted in a sealed container. The face of the container shall be clearly marked in the lower left corner as follows:

RFP FOR: Broadband Feasibility Study

Proposals must be submitted to:

Office of the County Commissioners
"Proposal for Broadband Feasibility Study"
One West Market Street Room 1103
Snow Hill, MD 21863

PROPOSALS OPENED 2/11/2019, @ 1:00 p.m. EST

<p>Proposals must be received by the date and time stated above or they will remain unopened and recycled. No allowance will be made for postmark or error in delivery to incorrect address. It is the sole responsibility of the bidder to ensure timely and correct delivery of bid to the person and address stated above. Overnight delivery services may not guarantee timely next day delivery. Please check with the service you use.</p>

Please direct all requests for information relating to this RFP in writing (Email Acceptable) to:

Worcester County Department of Information Technology
Attn: Brian Jones
One West Market Street
Room 1003
Snow Hill, MD 21863
bjones@co.worcester.md.us

RFP Documentation can also be viewed electronically at:
www.co.worcester.md.us

Proposals shall be prepared at the bidder's expense, proposals become a County record and are subject to the Public Information Act.

Proposal should include and will be evaluated based on:

1. Cover Sheet (Provided)
2. General Vendor Information Sheet (Provided)
3. Customer Reference Form (Provided)
4. Demonstration of understanding of scope of work
5. Proposed approach to performing the work defined in this RFP.
6. Outline of staff expertise, technical and financial capabilities
7. Assurance of staff depth to meet project timeline
8. Experience related to the project
9. Fee Schedule and Cost Proposal to complete deliverables
10. Proof of insurance as described in Vendor Qualifications

Overview and RFP Purpose

The Worcester County Department of Information Technology seeks qualified vendors to conduct a broadband feasibility study as a key input in the development of a comprehensive community broadband strategy. A more detailed description of the desired deliverables are provided in the following sections of this document. The County will consider proposals from single vendors or from multiple vendors working as a team, though a prime contractor must be identified in the case of the latter. The ideal vendor will have excellent technical and analytic depth in areas of interest to the County under this RFP, and must be highly-effective communicators, particularly in translating technical concepts to non-technical audiences. The County prefers firms with experience working with public sector organizations, having worked with governmental entities both larger and smaller than Worcester County. The County is employing this procurement method to both explore the costs and logistics of procuring the described services. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or any part thereof, to waive any formalities or informalities, to award the contract to the most responsive and responsible respondent(s) as deemed in the best interest of the County, or to suspend the procurement if the desired outcomes are not achieved.

Background, Project Justification and Key Drivers

General County Information

Worcester County is the easternmost county within the State of Maryland and is the only oceanfront county in Maryland. The County is bordered to the south by the State of Virginia, to the west by Somerset County and Wicomico County, Maryland, to the north by the State of Delaware, and to the east by the Atlantic Ocean.

The County is mostly rural in nature with the exception of the northern portions of the County, which contains some of the more developed areas, including Ocean Pines, Ocean City, and Berlin. The County's area totals 695 square miles, of which 468 square miles are comprised of land and 227 square miles are comprised of water. The County has more than 750 miles of shoreline.

Justification of Broadband

Without broadband service to residents, meaningful distance learning is not an option for those seeking higher education opportunities – resulting in many young people leaving the County.

While protecting the best interest of the County and its citizens, the goal of the County is to research the best options available that advance a viable means to bring the best possible broadband services to a county that has limited resources and sparse population

We acknowledge broadband is a critical service for quality of life, as is the case with roads, water, sewer, and electricity. Every home, business, non-profit organization, government

entity, and place of education should have the opportunity to connect affordably, easily, and securely. Worcester County should have broadband services that are shaped by the values of the citizens and businesses that take deep pride in our community.

Project Specifications and Deliverables

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be placed on completeness and clarity of content.

Scope of Work

1. Research and evaluate the current supply of broadband communications assets, products and services in the County through a range of efforts and methodologies identified by the successful firm. Develop a communications and outreach strategy to engage stakeholders, disseminate information and provide opportunities for inclusion in the process.
2. Utilizing Surveys and other methods, evaluate the current and future demand for broadband products and services in the County through a range of efforts and methodologies, including but not limited to conversations with:
 - a) Public stakeholders (e.g. local and regional government agencies, educational institutions, federal laboratories and agencies, etc.).
 - b) Private stakeholders (e.g. local businesses, business organizations, health care providers, digital divide advocates, other interested consumers and interest groups).
 - c) Broadband providers regarding the demand for, and adoption of, their products.
3. Perform a Gap Analysis of the Current Broadband Environment - evaluate the current environment against the current and future needs of Worcester County, including all stakeholders defined in the project. Determine the general economic and community impact broadband issues are having on Worcester County.
4. Identify funding sources and provide strong justification for funding to serve as the basis for a grant/loan application to support project implementation.

Deliverables

Using the results of the entire Scope of Work analysis, develop a comprehensive written report that presents alternatives to address the engineering and business parameters for deploying broadband services throughout Worcester County. The analysis must consider a wide continuum of business models and engineering options. It shall also highlight associated costs, alternative financing methods including other funding sources, as well as risk, timing and service quality considerations. The report must conclude the analysis by identifying a recommended strategy and associated action plan for its implementation.

Deliverables to include:

1. County demographics
2. Survey results to include but not limited to:
 - a. Demonstrate current level of service by identifying unserved and underserved residence and or businesses.
 - b. Tabulation of data based on findings in spreadsheet (Excel) form.
 - c. Equipment per household effected by lack of broadband
 - d. Needs of underserved or unserved residents
 - e. Geographical map showing underserved or unserved residents in Worcester County
 - f. Current broadband (broadband is defined as 25 MPS or more)providers if any available to resident
 - g. Current number of internet providers with bandwidth less than 25 MPS.
3. Incumbent providers, their location(s) and details on current services and technologies
4. Industry findings of network availability in the county along with backbone capabilities.
5. Similar projects that have been completed in other counties.
6. Potential project partners that may be used to obtain data for this study.
7. Synergies and sharing opportunities
8. Business and financial modeling in support of network build to include Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH), Fixed Wireless Broadband or a Hybrid System
9. Estimation of project cost and construction timeline should Worcester County decide to expand on a broadband installation project in the future.
10. Provide any GIS-based shapefiles created or utilized for the Project
11. Report that clearly defines their stakeholder evaluation process including their recommended participant level in order to reach statistically reliable results.
12. List of recommendations and suggested implementation measures to be employed by Worcester County for its “Next Step” Phase
13. Determine the general economic and community impact broadband issues are having on Worcester County as described in the “Scope of Work” section.
14. The GAP Analysis should include an evaluation of key issues limiting broadband expansion as described in the “Scope of Work” section.

Vendor Qualifications

1. Demonstrate to the county qualifications deemed necessary to determine the ability of the vendor, subcontractors or suppliers to perform the work requested. The vendor shall furnish to the County all such information and data.
2. Information provided shall include the following:
 - a. Name of parent company
 - b. Length of time in business
 - c. Total number of clients
 - d. Consulting tools that will be used to collect data
 - e. Physical location of office servicing this account
 - f. Number of staff at servicing location
 - g. Past experience and references
3. The County reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by or investigation of such vendor fails to satisfy the County that such vendor is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and/or to complete the work contemplated therein within the time required.
4. The vendor is specifically advised that any person, firm or other party to whom it proposes to award a subcontract or purchase order under this contract must be identified and found to be acceptable to the County.
5. The vendor must have the authority to do business in the State of Maryland and be in good standing.
6. The offeror shall be required to provide evidence that it has, and will maintain during performance of services under this contract, professional liability insurance and general liability insurance as applicable, and will be required to submit a Certificate of Insurance indicating the limits of such insurance that are satisfactory to the County.
7. The vendor accepts the terms that anything provided to the County, as a deliverable then becomes the sole property of Worcester County and cannot be redistributed in any form without the express written consent of the Worcester County Commissioners or its designees.
8. The County reserves the right to accept or reject all proposals or sections thereof when the rejection is in the best interest of the County. The County reserves the right to award without further discussion. Therefore, responses should be submitted initially with the most favorable terms the vendor proposes. The County reserves the right to reject the proposal of a vendor who has previously failed to perform properly or completed on time contracts and to reject the proposal of any vendor who in the opinion of the County, is not in a position to adequately perform the contract.

Proposal Cover Sheet

Name of Company	
Address of Home Office	
City of Home Office	
State of Home Office	
Zip Code of Home Office	
Phone Number of Home Office	
Federal EIN	
State EIN	

Contact Name: (Please print clearly)

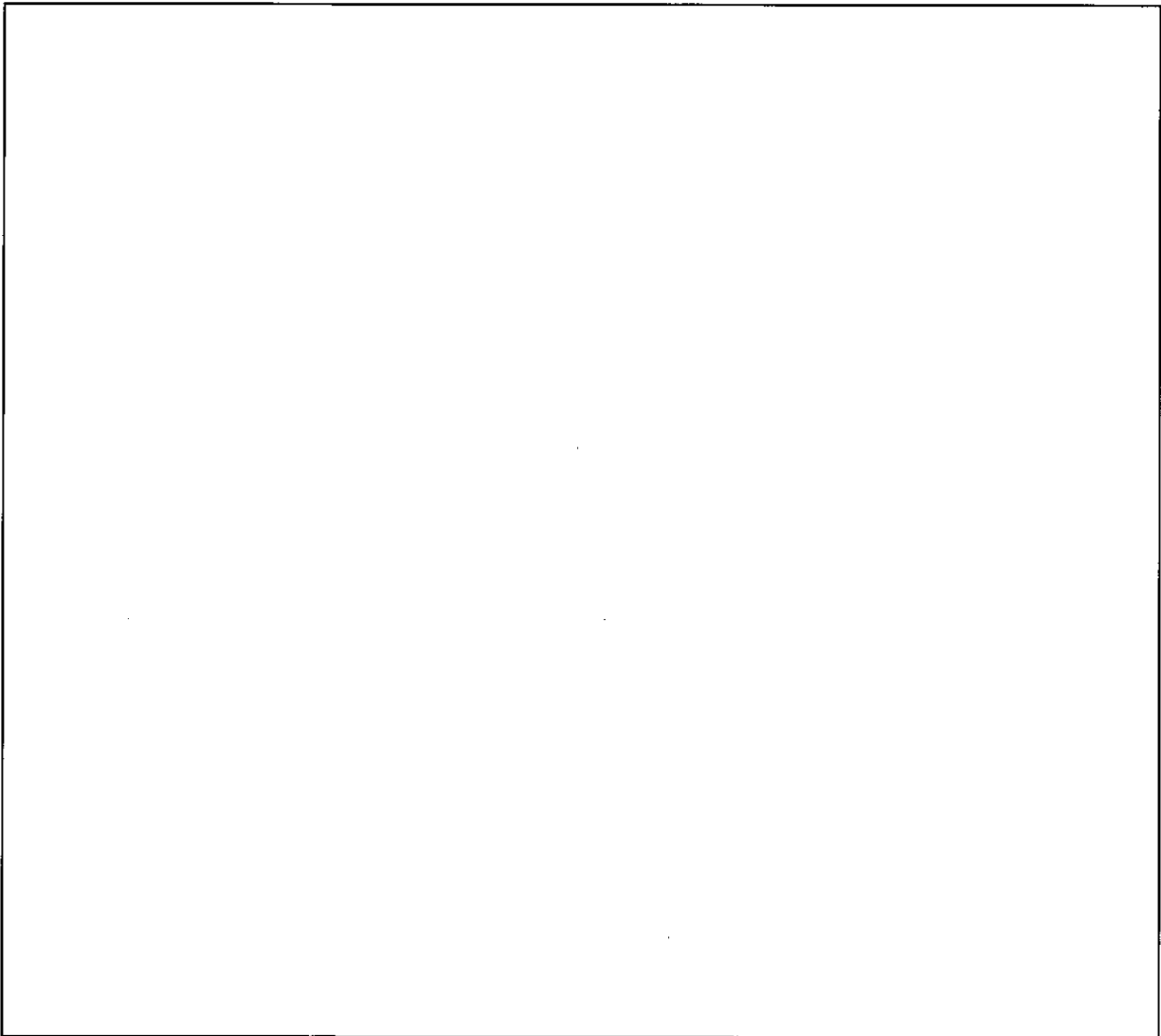
Contact Office Phone Number:

Contact Cell Phone Number:

Contact E-Mail Address: (Please print clearly)

“Proposal and cost schedule shall be valid and binding for ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) days following the proposal due date and will become part of the contract that is negotiated with the COUNTY.”

If the vendor has had any contract terminated for default during the past five years, all such incidents must be described. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance due to the vendor's nonperformance or poor performance; and the issue was either (a) not litigated or (b) litigated, and such litigation determined the vendor to be in default. In the space provided below, submit full details of all terminations for default experienced by the vendor during the past **five years**, including the other party's name, address, and telephone number. Present the vendor's position on the matter. The County will evaluate the facts and may, at its sole discretion, reject the vendor's proposal if the facts discovered indicate that completion of a contract resulting from this RFP may be jeopardized by selection of the vendor. If no such terminations for default have been experienced by the vendor in the past five years, declare so in the space provided.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the vendor to provide details of any contract terminations for default experienced in the past five years. The box is currently blank.

Customer Reference Form (Include information for three references)

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

BID FORM

Broadband Feasibility Study for the Residents of Worcester County

I/we have reviewed the specifications and provisions for furnishing a feasibility study for the residents of Worcester County. This study will serve the basis for data to provide Broadband coverage to Worcester County unserved residents at a later phase.

Total lump sum for services: _____

Services will be completed within _____ days from notice to proceed by Worcester County.

BID MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED TO BE VALID

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Typed Name: _____

Title: _____

Firm: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____